



PROSTITUTION

IN ITS RELATION TO THE

PUBLIC HEALTH.

OFFICE OF HEALTH OFFICER, }
St. Louis, May 29, 1873. }

To the Honorable Board of Health—

GENTLEMEN: The "Social Evil," a plant of mature growth wide spread, deep rooted, existing from the time of the patriarchs and prophets, attracts at this time unusual interest, deserves and should receive the sober consideration of every Christian man and woman in the land.

To protect the innocent from disease is a sacred duty; to put the vicious under restraint is the province of law. Whether that unhappy being whose very name it is a shame to speak, who counterfeits with a cold heart the transports of affection, who "fills her maw from a filthy vice," who lives by the evil she *causes to be done*, who is the symbol of degradation, should be prohibited from plying her vocation, should prosecute it unmolested, or should be controlled, and how? is the question agitating our community. Certain it is, "she remains while creeds and civilizations rise and fall." This being the indisputable state of the case, the regulation system would seem to be the course clearly indicated.

If the philanthropical would learn by experience, would redeem the fallen one, would wish moral and spiritual agencies to operate with success, it would become evident that the prostitute should be placed under power, which has the means of controlling her.

It is undoubtedly the duty of a good and wise government to provide for the health and morals of the community, especially when the consequences of unre-

strained action are serious and visible. The "liberty of the subject" is a precarious trust; but the absence of law to meet the case of the infected prostitute is in reality *license for evil*, since no precaution is taken to prevent most grievous infringements of the rights of others.

It is certainly an overstrained delicacy on the part of legislation to shrink from interference with a class which causes so much private misery, open violence, and public expenditure, as the records of our prisons, lunatic asylums, poor-houses and hospitals, can amply attest.

For the maiden who in a moment of passionate love renders up the jewel of her chastity, there may be some commiseration; but what excuse or palliation can be offered for the woman who abandons her body to every comer, for money? Infamy has attached to the latter among all people and in all ages.

Should not the Board of Health, aided by the police be charged with the security of the citizens against the propagation of contagious maladies? Should they not suppress prostitution as much as possible, and confine it in the limits compatible with public morals, security and health?

The control and restriction of prostitution is a law of self-defence. Why let it raise its head in the sunshine of the "let alone policy" and pursue unmolested its fearful ravages? Such conduct is incompatible with the welfare of the community. There is no such thing as absolute liberty. The social compact demands that each citizen give up a part of his individual freedom, when its exercise interferes with the rights of others. Shall a fearful malady that is stalking madly over the country be ignored, houses of prostitution given full swing, young girls be delivered over without a single effort to save them, to dens of vice? To prevent and relieve, is the special effort of the authorities under the present law. That it has accomplished much good, none familiar with its action doubt, or who view its workings with an unprejudiced eye, can fail to perceive.

Will the laborers in social science, will the thousands of good men and women who have the welfare of their fallen fellow-beings at heart, learn from experience?

Why such a storm of indignation? Why such a painful amount of sentimental morality and wholesale denunciation of the so-called "compact with iniquity," in view of the fact that the "social evil" exists, and has existed through all time, in spite of such clamor, and that too, from the deliberate choice of the females who recruit its ranks? The love of money and of city life, the desire for display, the pleasure of idleness, gluttony, coquetry, improvidence, poverty and innate depravity, are the insidious, yea, "the seductive wiles of the seducer."

As soon might we hope to bail the ocean dry, to touch the stars with our fingers, as to inhibit prostitution. The vice is as ancient as history and a universal and incurable evil, that must be tolerated, and should be, as far as pos-

sible, palliated. Do we not quarantine to prevent the spread of volatile contagious disease, and is it not productive of much good, though some cases do escape? Is it not then logical to conclude, that the ravages of syphilis, the most fearful in its consequences of all diseases—a disease communicated by contact, and that too immediate, may be mitigated by surveillance? That to consent to shame as a means of livelihood, that to deliver over the body, the temple of God, to the voluptuary, is in opposition both to laws human and divine, none knows better, or feels more keenly than the bawd herself. All liberty begins and ends in a quiet conscience, and it is in the correlation of duty and law that we look for the sublime grandure of the human soul. None need whisper the poor unfortunate that she is degraded, should be “physically explored;” too well she knows the consequences of the disease her accursed trade engenders, and a necessary operation daily practiced upon the purest and best women in the land surely cannot inflict further indignity upon her, who has so grossly outraged her womanhood. “The tyranny of which they are made the victims,” is to them, indeed, a kind and charitable act, and we believe they generally so construe it. Prostitutes, “American citizens, and human beings, though sinners and offenders against the law,” *should be* “under the control of the authorized police.” They *deserve* to lose a part of their liberty; they who violate several of the fundamental laws of society, cannot reasonably invoke the liberty that society guarantees to *all its members*. Prostitution is at war with good government, is an enemy to honest toil, compromises public health, charges society with paupers and criminals, engenders idleness, crime and horrible disease. Says Parent Duchatelet: “The frightful maladies of prostitution propagated since several centuries, and the fear of an inevitable contagion, have they diminished the number of prostitutes? Assuredly, no.” Man’s brutal passion, then, the fear of no frightful disease can assuage, and those who hope to decrease immorality by the fear of disease are equally doomed to disappointment with those who fear that immunity from disease will increase licentiousness. This latter conclusion seems warranted by the statement of bawdy-house keepers, that inspection has caused no perceptible change either in the number or character of their visitors. Until reformers remove the causes that induce prostitution, it is certain that society has the right, and that it is its duty, to restrain prostitution within the narrowest limits, both on account of morals and health.

In London and other towns of England, where prostitution is uncontrolled, the consequences are frightful to contemplate. The Waterloo road, the Quadrant, Haymarket and Waterloo place, offer sights of libertinage and vice beyond the most dissolute cities of the continent, says the Lancet.

The English, we are told revolt at the effort to extend to the whole civil population the “Contagious Diseases Act,” of which nation Richlot thus expresses himself: “Prostitution, exercising itself with so little control under

the canopy of Heaven, so to speak, is necessarily a powerful cause of public demoralization."

There thieves and prostitutes are bosom companions. There, according to Dr. Ryan, the number of foeticides are frightful; there the baleful effects of prostitution are revolting to behold. Why, then, the storm of indignation throughout the land, and the desire for repeal of the above named act?

During the period of seven years and three months, the English army for home service, numbering 44,611 effective men, gave each year 8,032 cases of venereal—181 affected in 1,000.

During a period of seven years the royal marine on the home coast, consisting of 28,800 effective men, gave each year 2,880 cases of venereal—134 in 1,000. (Acton.)

The militia recruits affected were 250 in every 1,000. (Lancet.)

During the year 1862, the marines in the home stations, numbering 20,760, presented 2,978 cases of venereal disease, or 143 cases of infection in every 1,000 men, (statistical report of the navy.) In 1862 and 1863, the English army had annually more than 318 venereals for every 1,000 effective men. M. S. Holland, who only estimates the number of prostitutes in the United Kingdom at 50,000, says that in the course of one year syphilis is contracted by more than 1,652,500 individuals of both sexes. Dr. Ryan further calculates, that 400,000 persons in London are directly or indirectly connected with prostitution, and that it causes an annual expense to the metropolis of two hundred millions of francs. (See Richelot.) These are a few statistics gathered from standard authorities, that indicate the prevalence of vice and of enthetic disease, in a country in which prostitution was at that time unregulated, and in which public sentiment revolts at restriction.

The effective force of the garrison at dissolute Paris, during the years 1858, 1859 and 1860, was 50,311 men. The number of annual venereals was 2,036; the proportion to 1,000 men being forty. During the same period, the English army of the interior furnished 306 venereals to every 1,000 men. (Statistical report.)

M. G. Lagneau says, in an article presented to *l'Academie de Medicine*: "In the majority of countries the frequency of venereal maladies accords with the insufficiency of the means of preserving health and the means of treatment, while in the army of the British Isles, where the means of preserving health are almost nothing, the annual proportion of venereals amounts to 318; in France, where the means are in force, but irregular, the proportion is 113; finally, in Belgium, where severe measures are uniformly applied, the army does not present annually more than ninety venereals for every 1,000 effective men."

Maritime cities are the hot-beds of venereal infection. According to the English navy report, North Africa, the Cape of Good Hope, Australia and Naples are very prolific in the infection. while China and Japan are terrible on

the same account. At these places, where prostitution is unregulated, naval officers regard it as dangerous to let the men go ashore, and the shortest stay is always marked by a notable increase of venereals. At Malta and Corfu, where it is restricted, there is little danger in communication with land. (British navy report for 1862.)

The medical statistics of the English army published by the Minister of War, announces that, "the surgeons of the corps, unanimously confirm, the number of men contaminated, is *always* in accordance with the degree of surveillance exercised by the local authorities over public and clandestine prostitution."

The English storm of indignation, then, jeopardizes and impedes the reform of most monstrous disorders, while concurrence would aid in the palliation of misery and promote the fulfillment of beneficent results over the wide world. If England would clean her own Augean stable, would look to her colonies, her maritime stations around the globe, she would do much for health and morals. England and America dishonor liberty by the infamous license given to the propagation of disease.

Jeannel says: "The total number of sailors who arrive in French ports from England, Holland, Italy, Spain, America, etc., by 28,395 ships, is 316,000. Suppose only five in 100 have venereal, one-fifth the amount found in England according to the examination of military recruits; then the frightful number of infected who come to renew and feed venereal disease is 15,800."

One vast international system against the propagation of the contagion should be established. Local laws effect much, but they cannot accomplish all.

At Paris, from 1816 to 1828, of 3,110 prostitutes arrested and visited, 814 were found infected—one to 3.82, or 260 per 1,000. This, as shown by Parent Duchatelet. The same author shows that from 1845 to 1854, the disease chiefly existed among clandestines; also, that 1830 girls picked up at the villages of St. Cloud, Boulogne and Severus, furnished one diseased to two and one-half arrested, or 400 per 1,000.

From 1857 to 1866, under the present system, M. Lecour gives only 224 infected with syphilis to each 1,000 clandestines arrested.

At Strasburg the police was reorganized in 1853. The proportion of clandestines found infected was 830 for every 1,000; in 1854 500 per 1,000; in 1855, 320 per 1,000.

In Bordeaux, according to Jeannel, the regular or inscribed prostitutes found sick have never exceeded twenty-two for the 1,000, while the clandestine or unregistered, in 1858, the year preceding the reorganization of the service, were infected in the proportion of 492 for every 1,000. The proportion was 418 for every 1,000 in 1859, and in the following year, in proportion varying from 203 to 273 for every 1,000. He adds, "after facts proved, one may consider that in the city of London and other cities of England and the maritime stations out of

Europe, where prostitutes are subjected to no special surveillance, the proportion of infected prostitutes exceeds 500 per 1,000. Thus the maritime cities of England and the United States, frequented as they are by an immense number of sailors belonging to all nations, should be regarded as the active hot-beds of venereal contagion."

The moral degradation and tyranny with which the St. Louis law visits the frail ones "perhaps only a few months removed from the kindly influence of respectable homes," may, after all, not be the worst horn of the dilemma. Is the personal dignity even of the *young prostitute* so sacred that she is to have permissive pass? Should we be so jealous of the rights of the citizens on *her account*, and so unnecessarily jealous, too, as would appear from the statement of Jeannel, who says, "that at Bordeaux, during the period of seven years (1855 to 1862,) of the total number of inscriptions, or registrations, 1,216, 1005 of that number were voluntary." It would seem, then that even under the severe laws of France, they seek the protection of examination.

M. Lecour, at Paris, reports in 1867 twenty cases of syphilis for every 1,000 in the regulated houses and ten cases for every 1,000, isolated, or, as we call them single-room girls. Jeannel says nothing is more rare than syphilis among the girls of well-kept houses. In Bordeaux they numbered one in 500 or two in 1,000 in 1864.

The "insumies" of Paris are inspected only every two weeks, the regulars once a week.

M. Lecour, in his statement of Paris, confounds in one general title the "fille de maison," the girls of the lowest condition, those of the "caboulots," those at the "barriers" and the girls of the most luxurious brothels; and it is the proportion of syphilis found among this eminently heterogeneous population, he compares with that found among the isolated girls.

At Bordeaux, Jeannel, in a house containing eight girls, regularly visited once a week, which he considers often enough, found only one girl diseased during a period of four years.

Thus far we have referred to foreign statistics only, because they have been quoted by the opposition, with the declaration that they gave the same sentence of absolute condemnation to the regulation of prostitution, in all cities and all ages; that there is no practical justification in the experiment we are making, and that the experience of other countries proves there is no prospect even of sanitary success, which was all that could be hoped for it, and the only pretext on which it *could be justified*.

The figures set forth, and all others to which we have had access, prove incontestably, that surveillance does diminish disease, not only among the prostitutes brought under the influence of the law, but also among the clandestines who cannot be brought under its influence.

Nowhere have we seen facts presented, to prove that regulation lowers the

standard of moral sentiment, thereby increasing licentiousness, and the gross number of prostitutes; nor does our own brief and imperfect experience sustain that conclusion. The assertion that the supposed immunity and the increased number of clandestine prostitutes engendered by regulation, neutralize the good influence of partial inspection, is, then, an assumption.

The facts sustain the conclusion common sense suggests, and indicates that imperfect surveillance gives partial immunity, and more complete surveillance, more perfect immunity.

Paris, we are told, has been under the license system for seventy odd years, and during that long period, the effort to restrict prostitution and mitigate disease has been and is, at this late day, a failure. It is indeed strange that in the light of that disastrous defeat, with misery, disease and depravity, increasing on every side, the infamous and injurious law should still be maintained in force, and that after her long and bitter sufferings we hear from France no such storm of indignation as emanates from self-virtuous England after her short and imperfect trial. Stranger still, in the face of the alleged baleful failure in France, guided by her unhappy experience, the system of regulating prostitution has in some form and to some extent been adopted in almost every civilized country. Those in which systems of surveillance are enforced, are England, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Prussia, Austria and Belgium.

They all maintain it in isolated localities, to their advantage and contemplate no change.

We come now to the plain question, is the regulation system as established in St. Louis calculated to lessen prostitution and diminish disease?

In our effort to solve this problem, we shall compare the prevalence of disease during the past two years, in which prostitution *was regulated*, with the prevalence of disease during the two preceding years, in which it *was not regulated* during eighteen months out of the twenty-four. Such comparison is adverse to the law. It cannot discriminate in its favor, since the results of eighteen months without regulation, and six months with regulation, are compared with twenty-four months of continuous regulation. Again we shall compare the status of prostitution on the 25th of July, 1870, the date at which the regulation system went into operation, with the status of prostitution on the 31st of March, 1873, after it had been subjected to the influence of regulation for about two years and three-quarters.

To this method of comparison objections have been made upon the ground, that the condition of prostitution at the present time should be compared with its condition at the time the last report of the Board was made, viz., the 25th of March, 1871. But the injustice of such comparison must be apparent to all, when the facts are correctly represented.

The report of March, 1871, was made after a trial of only eight months, just upon the inception of the law. At that time the bawds were not reconciled to its restraint. They regarded it simply as a new device for persecution, and

scores left the city, rather than submit to its provisions. In addition, it was drawn so loosely and with such a lack of precision, that its evasion was an easy task. Indeed its authority was openly defied, and conviction in the Police court for its violation could not be procured. The report of 1871 distinctly stated, the exhibit made did not include all the women in the city engaged in prostitution, "*but only that portion of them a defective registration was able to reach.*" It also stated, that the very large decrease in the total number of prostitutes was *mainly* due to a tremendous exodus from the city in consequence of the law's enforcement. No one at all familiar with the subject was surprised. No one regarded that enormous reduction as permanent, as normal, or so proclaimed it. They saw in the result, simply a fulfillment of their expectations and predictions, nor do we presume the committee who signed the report are yet prepared to retract the assertion, that a law properly meeting "*all the exigencies of the great question,*" would result in bringing about the greatest possible good to the prostitute, and give to mankind, at least, a greatly increased immunity from disease.

Supplementing these remarks with the statement, that the law is now more perfect, the bawds better reconciled to it, and instead of exerting, as they formerly did, all their energies to evade it, they now endeavor to prevent its evasion; and that the Chief of Police, who is perhaps the best authority, says, in his opinion there are now no greater number of clandestine prostitutes than before the enforcement of the law, and a very few, if any, who make a living by prostitution, who escape surveillance, we proceed to examine the results of the regulation system in the light of St. Louis experience.

The population of the city when the law went into operation was..	312,963
The number of prostitutes when the law went into operation was..	718
The proportion of prostitutes to the population was one in.....	435 plus
The population of the city in 1873 (Gould's Directory) was.....	428,126
The number of prostitutes registered March 31, 1873, was.....	653
The proportion of prostitutes to the population was one in.....	655 plus
The total number of cases treated at City and Quarantine Hospitals in 1869 and 1870 was.....	9,330
The total number of venereal cases treated was.....	1,124
The proportion of venereal cases treated to the population was one in.....	276
The proportion of venereal cases treated to the whole number of cases treated was one in.....	8.3 plus
The total number of cases treated at City and Quarantine Hospitals in 1871 and 1872 was.....	10,076
The total number of venereal cases treated was.....	925
The proportion of venereal cases treated to the population was one in.....	462 plus

The proportion of venereal cases treated to the whole number of cases treated was one in.....	10.8 plus
The proportion of prostitutes found diseased when the law went into operation in 1870 was 58 in 718, or one in.....	12.37
The average number of prostitutes treated at the Social Evil Hospital during the past six months was 34 plus in 653, or one diseased in.....	19.06 plus
The number of deaths from venereal disease during 1869 and 1870 was.....	36
The number of deaths from venereal disease during 1871 and 1872 was.....	18
The total number of bawdy houses when the law went into operation (1870) was.....	119
The total number of bawdy houses March 31, 1873, was.....	133
The total number of bawds living in private apartments when the law went into operation was.....	205
The total number of bawds living in private apartments, March 31, 1873, was.....	7
The average number of bawds in each house when the law went into operation, was.....	6.03 plus
The average number of bawds March 31, 1873, was.....	4.98 plus

The following table shows the total number of registrations since the enactment of the law to the 31st of March, 1873, and also shows the nationalities, the former occupations, the number of women stricken off the register on presentation to the Board of Health and Board of Police Commissioners of satisfactory evidence of reform, and the reasons given by the bawds for embracing the profession of prostitution.

The difference between the total number of prostitutes "inscribed" and the number now registered, are reported as having changed their residence to other cities, and as having died.

In filling up certificates of death physicians frequently omit to designate the occupation of the deceased, and, in consequence of this error, the mortality record unfortunately presents no reliable evidence of the death-rate among prostitutes.

Total number of prostitutes registered since the law went into force July 12, 1870, to March 1, 1873.....2,685

TABLE SHOWING NATIONALITIES OF SAME.

United States, (white).....	1,904
United States, (colored).....	326
Germany.....	150
Ireland.....	133
Canada.....	53
England.....	66
Italy.....	2
France.....	25
Scotland.....	13
Cuba.....	1
Switzerland.....	4
Spain.....	2
Holland.....	1
Norway.....	1
Poland.....	1
Bohemia.....	2
Sweden.....	2
China.....	3
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Total.....	2,685

TABLE SHOWING FORMER OCCUPATION.

Clerks, saleswomen and teachers.....	63
Seamstresses and Milliners.....	233
Servants.....	821
Housekeepers.....	62
Married.....	122
No occupation.....	1,384
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Total.....	2,685

TABLE SHOWING REASON FOR BECOMING PROSTITUTES.

Choice.....	2,288
Seduced.....	56
Necessity.....	254
For support.....	26
Poverty.....	23
Deserted by husband.....	9
Ill treatment of parents.....	11
Drunkenness.....	9
Husband's desire.....	1
Led to it by sister.....	1

To support children.....	7
Total.....	2,685

Total number stricken off register on promise of reform since the law went into force..... 237

Again, a large proportion of the patients treated at the City and Quarantine Hospitals have not resided in the city ten days prior to their admission. With the perfection and extension of railroad communication that proportion has been constantly *increasing*. Doubtless many venereal cases treated in those institutions during the past two years were not infected in St. Louis, or may have suffered from chronic forms of the malady, contracted before regulation was adopted. The same is true of the diseased bawds reported. Finally, the figures demonstrate that, in consequence of the diminished amount of venereal disease treated during the past two years at the City and Quarantine Hospitals alone, a saving to the tax-payers has been effected of \$6,014 77. An annual saving proportionately great, with interest, would amount at the end of ten years to a sum equivalent to \$46,690 18. How much money has been spared to private individuals in consequence of this increased immunity, to say nothing of relief from sorrow, suffering and deformity, we have no means of estimating; but it must be great—since the almost universal testimony of physicians is that venereal maladies, in private practice, have decreased almost one half.

It will be seen that the number of houses of prostitution has increased from 119 to 133, while the number of bawds occupying private apartments has decreased from 205 to seven.

To accomplish this result has been the earnest desire of the sanitary and police authorities; for, by concentrating prostitutes, it is possible both to inspect and police them more thoroughly.

The single-room women are the street-walkers that, like the wild dogs of the East, infest all unregulated cities, and some idea can be formed of the extent to which that kind of prostitution is carried when unmolested, from the statement of the Chief of Police of Boston that in that city, of 175 persons arrested in one night, 125 were female night-walkers, and of which number seven-eighths were under the age of twenty-one. It must be apparent to the most casual observer that that practice has undergone a marked decrease in Saint Louis.

The domiciles of these women were mostly in tenement houses, generally located in densely populated districts, where association with the innocent was intimate, and where, by precept and example, they were demoralizing in the highest degree. Their habitations were obscure and unsuspecting, and not easily found by those disposed voluntarily to seek their society. They were, therefore, obliged by necessity to advertise their profession by street-walking, their general demeanor, and their apparel. The most fashionable thoroughfares

were thus converted into public brothels, where many were allured to sin and to disease by the fascination of a moment, who did not and would not have designedly placed themselves in the way of temptation.

The concentration of prostitutes is also desirable for other reasons. By the judicious selection of suitable situations for houses of ill-fame, the value of surrounding property is depreciated in the least possible degree, thereby benefiting private interest and the public revenue.

It has been argued that prostitutes were less law-abiding, that the shame of a greater number was made notorious, their degradation made deeper, and their reformation made less likely in consequence of regulation, because the Police Department reports show a greater number of arrests among prostitutes last year than during the preceding year. This is a mistaken conclusion. The total number of arrests among any class of persons must be greater when that class is made amenable to law and kept constantly under its eye, than when no law is applied to it; but, it does not follow that the majority of the class is less law-ful, and this is true of the case under consideration. We have the authority of the Chief of Police for the statement that bawds are much *more orderly* and well behaved than before regulation was instituted.

The Police Report does not indicate that a larger number of separate and distinct prostitutes were arrested, but simply that a larger number of arrests were made among that class of persons. In one instance the same person was arrested forty-five times during the past year. A few incorrigible individuals, by frequent offences, may therefore increase the total number of arrests, and that fact does not at all demonstrate general ill-behaviour, or indicate that a greater number of different individuals have been subjected to the exposure and humiliation that arrest and public trial necessitates.

When the Reformatory and Industrial institution, now in course of construction, is completed by the Board, means of honorable maintenance will be offered to those erring ones, and the strongest inducements that can be presented will beckon them to the paths of virtue. Its doors, too, will be thrown wide open to all disposed to labor for the advancement of moral purity. Reforms will thus be possessed of more potent facilities, enjoy better opportunities, and be enabled to exert with greater force the benign influence of moral suasion, *through the instrumentality of the law*, than would be possible without it.

But it is said that to force prostitutes into a prison-hospital is illegal and unjust, and that it is immoral, because its tendency is to diminish self-respect, thereby confirming immorality, and that no distinctions should be made between prostitutes and other patients. We answer that self-defence is always justifiable, that the safety of the people is the supreme law, and that charity is not less laudable, not less redolent with good, because its acceptance is forced and its benefits are unappreciated. Nor does isolation demoralize and diminish the self-respect of prostitutes half so much as their intimate association with the

patients of a general hospital tends to demoralize and diminish the self-respect of better people. An innocent girl is admitted to a general hospital, poor, homeless and friendless. After recovery she is again thrown on the cold charity of the world, perhaps before the full vigor of health has returned, with no money, no employment, no prospect but labor and want, and, not unfrequently, without even a temporary refuge. Her discharge is rendered necessary to make room for some other sufferer. In this dependant condition an intimacy has been formed in the hospital with some "frail one," who exhibits her jewels and dresses, describes in glowing terms the attractions of her idle, careless life of pleasure and plenty, and poisons her mind with the most seductive allurements and persuasions. Tempted thus powerfully, under the most favorable circumstances, she takes the fatal step and is another recruit in the ranks of shame. Similar cases to this have repeatedly come to our notice, and doubtless to the notice of all whose duty makes them familiar with the internal affairs of the City Hospital. To protect the defenceless against such outrage, to prevent the commission of such revolting crime, and to relieve the poor but pure and worthy from unwilling and repulsive association is sufficient reason, could no better be given, why prostitutes should be excluded from the wards of general hospitals. The cry for the examination of men is practically too absurd to merit consideration.

In conclusion, those who oppose the regulation system in Saint Louis "undoubtedly mean well, and we feel no disposition to find fault except" that they deal with a practical subject in an unpractical way, and we counsel greater deliberation, more extended inquiry, and patient observation until "the alphabet is learned."

We do not suppose our registration is, or ever will be, perfect, or that every woman of easy virtue can be controlled by law; nor is it desirable it should be so, for, as has been truly stated, "it is a great mistake to class all fallen women together under one sweeping censure of contempt, as if they were absolutely vile and irredeemable," or all equally guilty.

We confess to inexperience in the management of the vice of prostitution. Since ours is the first attempt in the United States to control it, the novelty of the undertaking precluded any other possibility, nor could very many useful lessons as to detail, or any definite prediction of results be drawn from European experience. We live in another land, our habits, sentiments, laws, and necessities are radically different, and our own experience must be our guide. We do not assume that our figures, or that any foreign figures, represent with precise exactitude the prevalence of disease and the extent of prostitution. It is not possible they can ever be *accurately* expressed in numbers; but we do contend that our experience, so far as it goes, and more extensive experience in foreign countries, demonstrates with unmistakable clearness the correctness of the principles on which regulation and license systems are predicated. Our ex-

perience to the present time [proves the enforcement of regulation to be economical and humane, that it is efficient in the promotion of morals and prevention of disease. This is all its most sanguine advocates claimed or expected. It is an ample vindication of the experiment made, and an unanswerable reason why the experiment should be continued until the ultimate result is fully and conclusively settled.

To determine that result with any degree of certainty will require an experience of at least ten years.

Legislators are asked to surrender, without sufficient trial of the present system, the hopeful promises of future good so beneficently foreshadowed by past experience, and to sacrifice lives, health, morals and money on the altar of prejudice. Have the opponents of the system any substitute to propose in lieu of registration? Would compliance with their request be consonant with the mighty interests legislators are chosen to cherish and protect? Would it be a fulfillment of the sacred obligation under which they rest? It is, indeed, within our power to choose between good and evil, to act with wisdom and prudence, or to be guided only by illiberal bias not tempered with discretion, and, as time unfolds the scheme of the future, let us hope the choice may be for good.

Very respectfully,

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Health Officer.

